

No Problem, El by alltoowheeler

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Summary:

prompt from stranger-from-hawkins on tumblr: el trying to figure out how ride mike's bike one day in the front yard and steve comes by to pick up nancy to drive to school but ends up giving el a little bike riding lesson.

No Problem, El

It was a warm Tuesday morning in April when Steve pulled up to the Wheelers' house in his car and nearly hit Eleven.

"Jesus Christ!" He slammed on the brakes and jumped out of the car. "Eleven, you okay?"

She nodded, breathing hard. She was gripping the handlebars of a bike.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"Okay. Sorry. Be careful, okay?" He gently ruffled her pile of curls. She nodded again.

Steve jogged to the door and knocked. Mrs. Wheeler opened the door. "Oh, hi, Steve. Nancy should be ready to go soon. Do you want to come in?"

Steve looked back at Eleven. She was on the grass, struggling to balance on the bike. "No thanks, ma'am, I'll wait out here."

He walked over to Eleven. "Hey."

She looked up and almost fell over. "Hi."

"Is that Mike's?"

"Yes," she frowned, her shoelace caught in the chain.

"Here, let me," he said, kneeling down to untangle it. "There."

She smiled. "Thank you." She tried to balance again, wobbling from one outstretched foot to the other.

"Do... do you want help with that?"

She looked at him. "Okay."

“Okay.” Steve tried to remember what his dad had taught him first. “Well, you have to be moving to balance. You need the momentum.” He walked to the front of the bike and grabbed the handlebars, facing Eleven. “How about I steer for now, and you focus on pedaling? Is that okay?”

She met his eyes. “Yes.” She pushed the pedals as Steve walked backwards across the yard, holding the front of the bike steady.

“Great! Do you want to steer now?” She looked concerned. “Don’t worry, I’ll keep holding onto the back.”

“Okay...”

“You steer like this, okay?” he said, turning the handlebars from side to side. She mimicked him, the front wheel digging a divet in the soft grass.

He held onto the back of the bike seat. “Are you ready?”

“Yes.”

They rolled slowly back across the yard. “Great job!” Steve said, holding his hand up. She looked at him questioningly. “Oh, it’s a high five.” Silence. “You put your hand up”– he took her hand and held it up to his– “and slap. Go on.” She hesitantly smacked her palm against his. “Yeah, that’s right!” She smiled.

He gestured at the bike. “You wanna try again?”

Nancy hurried down the stairs and out the front door. “Sorry, Steve, I couldn’t find my English notes and–” she stopped. Eleven was biking up Maple Street with Steve running behind her, holding the seat.

“Nancy!” he cried, helping Eleven screech to a stop. “Wanna see her try it by herself?”

“What– I mean, yeah,” Nancy sputtered. “Yeah, I’d love to see.”

“Ready?” she heard Steve say.

“Ready,” said Eleven.

She started pedaling, Steve still behind her. After a few feet he let go and jogged after her. Her curls flew in the wind, the bike whizzing down the street; a huge smile breaking over her face.

Steve stopped in the middle of the street, panting. Nancy walked over to him. "Did you help her?"

He looked up. "I mean, yeah, a little." He shrugged, watching Eleven turn around and start back towards them. "She's a smart kid. Picks it up easy."

Nancy smiled and kissed him as Eleven pulled up to them, almost running into Steve.

"Woah! Careful," he laughed. "Hey, I gotta take Nance to school. You can keep practicing if you want, though. You should show Mike when he gets home. I bet he'll be really impressed."

"Really?"

"Yeah!" he high-fived her. "See you later."

"Bye."

As they walked to the car, they heard Eleven again. "Steve?"

He turned around. "Yeah?"

"Thank you."

"No problem, El."